



Delaware Wildlife Action Plan 2015 Revision SGCN List Review and Response

Summary of Reviewer Concerns and Comments for the 2015 Draft List of Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Reviewers expressed that including common species as well as rare species in the WAP was desirable and important and that there should not be an overemphasis on rarity in the criteria.

Due to the inclusion of a broad northeast regional perspective in our approach, many species that are very common in Delaware are included as SGCN. A few examples include: Horned Lark (S4B, S5N), Acadian Flycatcher (S5B), Fowler's Toad (S5), Northern Dusky Salamander (S5), American Eel (S5), Mummichog (S5), Seaside Dragonlet (S5), Needham's Skimmer (S5) and many others. Of these example species just mentioned, none were included in the 2007 WAP. In addition, if actions for SGCN and RSGCN are adopted and implemented, they should help improve conditions for more common species.

Reviewers were concerned that climate change and sea level rise vulnerability were not explicitly included in SGCN selection criteria.

Although these factors are not specifically used in the selection criteria, they are included in the species prioritization process. However, imminent threat from these factors could trigger a species' inclusion via Criterion 9.

In addition, a review of Delaware species that were scored by Maryland's CCVI process as Highly Vulnerable or Extremely Vulnerable indicates that nearly all of these species were already captured as SGCN in our process.

Reviewers were concerned about the removal of bald eagle, osprey, great blue heron, and barred owl from the GCN list since 2007.

In response to concerns about the extremely high disturbance sensitivity of great blue heron rookeries, and their aggregated nesting habits, that species was retained as a GCN on the basis of Criterion 9. However, bald eagle, osprey and barred owl are all species that are increasing in Delaware and no longer meet S-rank criteria, nor do their populations show the level of sensitivity to disturbance that great blue herons do.



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Reviewers cautioned against utilizing number of Element Occurrences in selection or ranking as these data may not reflect true status and/or may not be up to date.

EO Numbers are not used in selection or ranking but were provided to reviewers for informational purposes. These are not necessarily up to date.

Reviewers suggested consulting many regional and national taxon-specific conservation plans and data sources.

These plans and data sources have been incorporated and will be referenced in the final Plan.

Reviewers suggested additional SGCN inclusion criteria that address values of wildlife that may not be reflected by rarity, population stability, or conservation status. Suggested criteria included: representative species for habitat types, indicator species, keystone species, foundation species, and umbrella species.

While we recognize the importance of these concepts, and look forward to incorporating them to the extent practicable in the WAP in the form of actions and monitoring, literature has shown that in practical application for conservation outcomes, their use is fraught with difficulties unless the terms are very specifically defined. In addition, we lack information to evaluate many species on this basis and a complete evaluation of all Delaware species as to whether they meet one of these definitions is beyond the scope of this SGCN list revision.

Reviewers suggested keeping coyote on the GCN list.

This species is now officially considered non-native to Delaware by Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, so it is excluded from consideration on that basis.

We thank all of those who reviewed the SGCN criteria and process and the draft SGCN list! All of your comments, questions, and concerns are important to ensure the most comprehensive SGCN list and WAP possible for Delaware and all of its residents, visitors, and wildlife!